



## Maintaining your Non-Immigrant Status

To maintain your valid non-immigrant F-1 status, you must have:

- An unexpired passport
  - You must always have a valid passport. If your passport will expire while you are in the United States, you need to contact your embassy to find out how to renew it.
  
- A valid Form I-20 with a current travel signature
  - Always be aware of the expiration date on your I-20, and **do not let your I-20 expire**. Be sure to get a travel signature before departing the United States. (Please email [ghi@samuelmerritt.edu](mailto:ghi@samuelmerritt.edu))
  - You will also need to get a new I-20 if you change your degree level, your major, your funding source, or the number of F-2 dependents you have. Timing can be critical for all these changes, so start the process early.
  
- A full-time course load in each required term of study- if you have any questions regarding this requirement, please contact [ghi@samuelmerritt.edu](mailto:ghi@samuelmerritt.edu) for further help.
- You must be registered in SEVIS no later than 30 days after the program start date, and within 30 days of the start date of each academic term.
  
- No more than 20 hours per week of on-campus work during an enrolled term
  
- OPT or CPT authorization for any work off-campus
- Report a change of address to GHI ([ghi@samuelmerritt.edu](mailto:ghi@samuelmerritt.edu) ) within 10 days of the change, so that your SEVIS record can be updated.
- Abide by the F-1 grace period rules (30-day early arrival, 60 days upon completion of studies).

Failure to comply with any of the above-referenced rules can result in the loss of your F-1 immigration status and possibly the accrual of unlawful presence.

The Department of Homeland Security has more information on maintaining status on its [Study in the States website](#).

### **If you Lose your F1 Status**

There is a process to apply for reinstatement should you violate the terms of your F-1 status, but it is complicated. Your immigration advisor can assist you with basic information on F-1 reinstatement, but you may need to obtain legal advice from a trusted immigration attorney as well. Information regarding reinstatement can be found in the Department of Homeland Security [Study in the States website](#).